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"I HAVE ONLY one regret about Israel. That I did not come earlier."

The speaker, a slightly-stooped man in his early forties, is Pinchas Sela, ex-Filippo la Rocca of Piacenza, Italy. Before coming to Israel, he dug coal for 20 years in the Belgian mining town of Liège.

Sela speaks not only for himself, but for all the members of his small but very special group. Altogether they are 11 families, some 80 souls, of ex-Marranos — secret Jews. They arrived in Israel as new immigrants in November 1970.

"Why do I like it better here? Well," says Sela who lives with his wife and four children in a three-room Amidar apartment in Beersheba and works as a painter for Israel Aircraft Industries, "I work above ground instead of 200 metres below the earth. And we have blue skies instead of the constant grey of Liège. In Beersheba, *Yeshu'a, geshem, yeshu'a*" ("When it rains, we celebrate") he adds in his Italian-accented Hebrew.

Our visit with the new Israelis is pleasant — for it is a reunion. All of us had met in Liège when Israel had been only a dream — the Marranos and I and David Izbutzki, himself an ex-Belgian, the man from the Jewish Agency's Immigration and Absorption Department, who, as Director for Aliya in the Benelux countries, had guided these people toward their settlement in Israel and is now following their progress here. Our last meeting had taken place in the Jewish Centre in Liège on the festive eve of the group's departure for Israel.

Now we are all comfortably seated in the living room of the Carmel family. The children, as on that wintry evening almost three years ago, are models of good behaviour, listening quietly to the talk of their elders. They have grown considerably taller, and are dressed in Israeli shorts and summer cottons. The most striking difference from their Belgian appearance is the tan on their arms and faces, no longer the white of youngsters who are strangers to the life of the outdoors.

Absent from our meeting because he is still at work at Makhteshim, doing overtime, is the head of the family, David Carmel. In Italy and Belgium his name had been Scarcell.

"But our forefathers were already named Carmel," says the lady of the house. "How do we know? How do we know that we were Marranos? Fathers told their sons, who in turn told their children, and so on. That is how we kept our customs and our knowledge of our past as Jews."

Now that they have come to the land of which they and their forefathers dreamed how does reality measure up to expectation? Are any of the newcomers disappointed with the facts of Israeli life? "Has *veshalita*. We only regret we did not come sooner."

Were there any problems with work? Getting apartments? Relations with neighbours? The answers are all negative.

"Every beginning is difficult," chimes in Mrs. Carmel. "But it did not take long before we established our homes. Just look, she waved her hand at the spotless apartment, "is there anything missing here?"

"I came with nothing, just a desire to live in Israel," says Moshe, the eldest of the eight Carmel children, and himself the father of two. He works at the Hama ceramics factory. "And now we have everything we need, from refrigerators to sewing machines for our wives, no car, but we manage without. Our children are like *sabra*. We've already had a bar mitzva at the Wall and two weddings in our family. One sister married a Moroccan. He works in a ceramics factory in Yeruham and they are very happy there. My other sister

married an Argentinian who works in the port of Eilat. "As for me, no problems. If I need more money, I put in extra hours at work. I like to go on long excursions and to think around the house. Tomorrow morning I am off for a 'vacation' — a month of *mitum* in Sinai," smiles Moshe, whose Hebrew, due no doubt to his army exposure, is the best among the male members of this homogeneous group of once-secret Jews.

"This time I go to Sinai, but where haven't I been in this country!" The short, nimble-looking new immigrant declares proudly.

MARRANOS REVISITED

Lili Bat-Aharon.

Photographs by Rachel Hirsch



Members of the Carmel and Sela families: "We are only sorry we didn't come earlier."



(Above) Shmuel and Yonatan, who is joining the Army in January. (Below) Rina and Ruti.



Some of the ex-Marranos, like Tuviya Florenti and his wife, have already managed to travel back from a trip to Europe, specifically to Italy, and more specifically to the village of Piacenza, where they persuaded Tuviya's parents to come and settle in Israel. The elder Florentis are now residents of Eilat, living on a pension from Italy.

The younger Florentis, childless, are well established in Beersheba. "My name is Tuviya, from Piacenza. Actually I should have been Pesach, but I did not want to eat *matzah* all year round," he quips. They both attend an ulpan and they both work. The wife, an attractive brunette with a round, smiling face, creates sweaters on a knitting machine. "I am swamped with demands both from stores and from private customers," she says. "How much do I sell them for? A long-sleeved closed sweater sells for IL28 — plus the wool, of course."

THE FEELING OF contentment and quiet pride in accomplishment radiates in all directions, reaching the children in the room. "What do you want to be when you grow up?" "A fier," Shmuel, 12, retorts without hesitation. "And you?" The turn is 11-year-old Rina's. She chooses hair-

dressings. And green-eyed Ruti? "I would like to serve food on airplanes," she replies quickly, flashing a hostess smile.

The door opens and a dusty, thin 17-year-old makes his appearance. This is Yonatan Carmel, who has just finished mechanics school and has found temporary work on a construction site. He plans to enter the army in January. And after his service? "Oh, I want to stay in the army. I want to be like Moshe Dayan."

While most of his elders still have no political involvement in their new homeland — most of them had no opinions on, and little interest in, the forthcoming elections, young Yonatan is more definite on some of Israel's burning issues.

"I believe the Russian immigrants should get all the things they are getting. Life ought to be made easier for them, after all they have suffered. The Black Panthers? I disagree with their methods. But I understand why they are doing what they are. I believe one must talk and discuss and talk again, until all means of peaceful agreement are exhausted. This country is wonderful, especially for young people and I'm sure we shall settle all our problems satisfactorily."

WHAT BROUGHT these people to Beersheba? One year before coming to Israel to settle, the heads of families collected, their hard-earned mining money and took an "explorers' trip." They liked Beersheba most of all.

"This is the best place in Israel. Have you seen all the buildings going on in our town? That's because everybody wants to move down here — we have the best air, and plenty of work."

The ex-Marranos are here to stay. Almost all have Hebraized their names. La Rocca is Sela, Scarcell is Carmel, Marrac has become Darom, and Feliciotti has undergone a metamorphosis to Peles.

It was Carmine Policotti, now Carmel Peles, who was the spokesman for the group on that festive eve in Liège. On that occasion, he traced the history of the group, dwelling on their trials and tribulations as they took steps to create their new identity. "We were dispersed and lost and we have found one another. Now we are about to realize our dream of living in Israel." He thanked the Jews of Liège for their hospitality and expressed the hope of meeting them one day in Jerusalem. Three years later, Carmel, now a soldier in the IDF, directs squads of recruits.

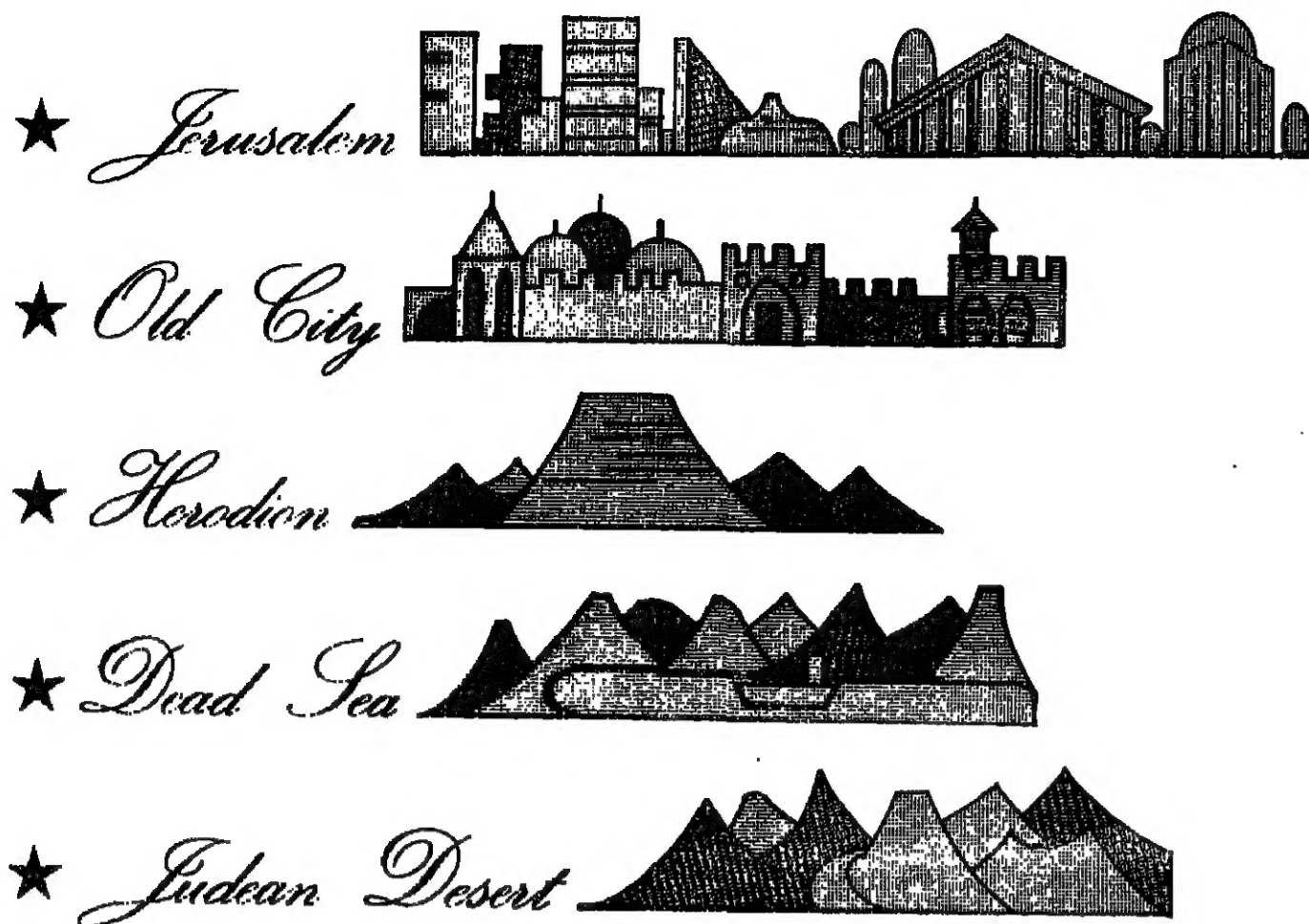
THE 11 FAMILIES had gone to Liège in the early 'fifties from southern Italy from tiny, impoverished villages where earning one's bread had become impossible and emigration was the only answer. They were mostly farmers. In Belgium they became miners. Their children learned French and attended school and outwardly looked no different from the children of the immigrants who had come to Belgium from Spain and Italy in search of a livelihood.

But, these people were different and felt different. They had their sons circumcized (though by a doctor, not a *moהל*). It was Shabbat candles, and fasted on Yom Kippur. Even after they were earning decently, something seethed inside them, not permitting peace of mind.

It was the impact of the Six Day War, which made them want to become full-fledged Jews. This was done with the help of the Jewish Agency representative, David Izbutzki, and the Chief Rabbi of Italy. And once the process of Judaizing was completed, they asked themselves: if we are Jews, why not live in Israel?

For the ex-Marranos, practice is as good as theory. "Everything is better here. For the simple reason that this is our country."

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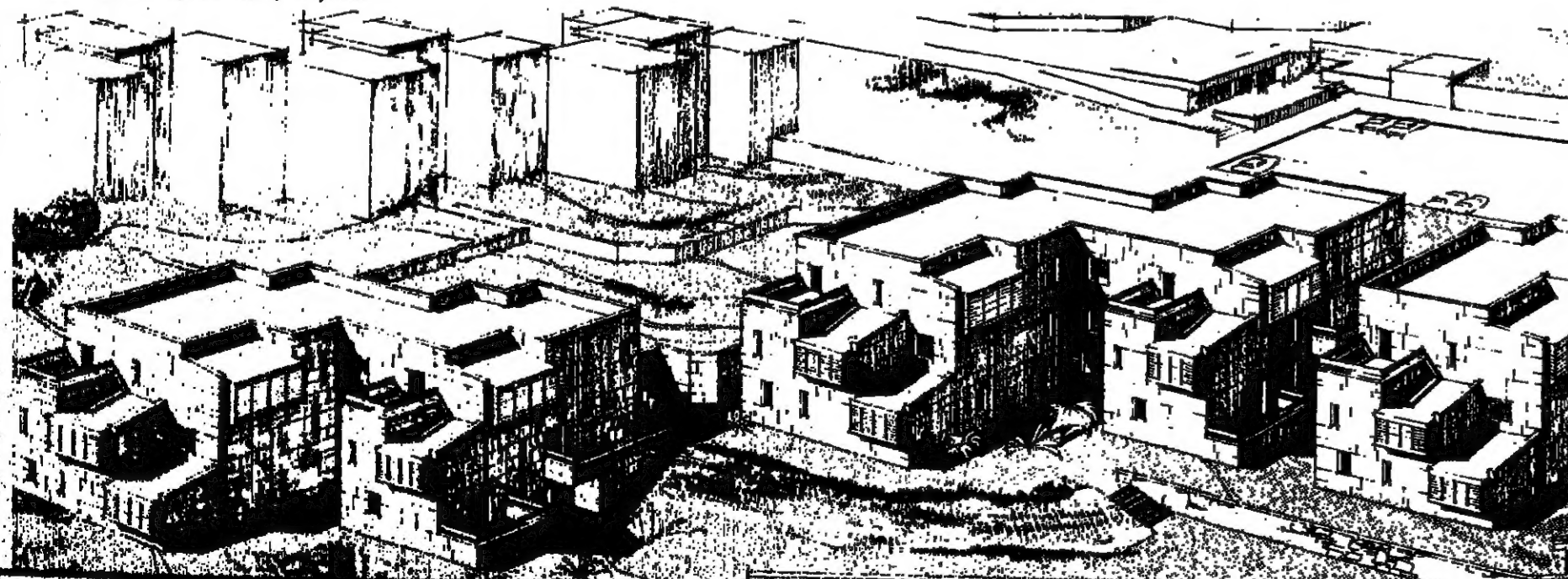
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Can faith survive hell?

FAITH AFTER THE HOLOCAUST by Eliezer Berkovits, N.Y., Univ. 180 pp.

Zvi Yaron

THERE ARE questions which cry out for answers. And there are questions so painful that the most convincing answers cause excruciating agony. The Holocaust was so horribly evil that the glib explanations, whether they are historical or theological, only increase the anguish. There is an aura of unreality in all these intellectual exercises with their erudite precedents and scholarly analogies. How do we study a horrendous event of such a mind-boggling magnitude? The Israeli historian Professor Ya'acov Talmon, recently asked: "What is the meaning of history's greatest horror within the scheme of universal history — what is its sense, its purpose, its logic?"

But, does the Holocaust belong to the "scheme of universal history?" The Jewish-American theologian, Prof. Richard Rubenstein, has argued that Auschwitz is the decisive refutation of the traditional Jewish belief in a providential God who acts in history. On the other hand, is it tolerable to theologize about an incomprehensible event in the classical terms of divine providence and theodicy? How do we apply our reasoning faculties to the understanding of events that are essentially outside the frame of reason?

And yet, the questions must be asked. Avoiding those questions is worse than providing unsatisfactory answers. Let the searing pain cut into our souls, and let it humble us into confessing our utter frustration and astonishment and cause us to refrain from the reckless manipulation of historical and theological quotations and precedents. Possibly, we may then reach out for the answers in humility and with the awareness that the Holocaust is unique and radically unlike any other cruelty perpetrated in all of the history of mankind.

DR. ELIEZER BERKOVITS is a theologian who is distinguished by perspicacity, courage and immense Jewish scholarship. He began to write this book during the anxious "weeks of waiting" before the Six Day War when the threat of another Holocaust hung over the Jewish People. He recalls that he wrote "under almost unbearable tension" because of his conviction that this generation "could not have survived another Holocaust." He is an Orthodox Jew and he nevertheless faces courageously the problem of "mipnei hatelevut" — "because of our sins" — which pervades both Jewish prayer and traditional theology. As in his earlier book, "Towards Historical Judaism," which appeared in England in 1948, and aroused at the time admiration among many young religious Jews and opprobrium from the rabbinical establishment, Prof. Berkovits urges a reinterpretation of this concept:

"No doubt it does demand great strength of character of an individual — and how much more of an entire people — to acknowledge that one's misfortunes are due to one's failings and to accept responsibility for them. At the same time, looking at the entire course of history, the idea that all this has befallen us because of our sins is an utterly unwarranted exaggeration. There is suffering because of sins; but that all suffering is due to it is simply not true. The idea that Jewish martyrdom through the ages can be explained as divine judgment is obscene. Nor do we for a single moment entertain the thought that what happened to European Jewry in our generation was divine punishment for sins committed by them. It was injustice ab-

solute; injustice mandated by God. In fulfilled terminology we speak of *hester panim*, the hiding of the face, God's hiding of His countenance from the sufferer. Man seeks God in his tribulation but cannot find Him."

Prof. Berkovits goes on to point out that the Bible has two interpretations of the "hiding of the face." There is a *hester panim* which is a divine punishment for sins, as it occurs, for instance, in Deuteronomy 31:17-18. God will hide his face and terrible disasters will befall the Jewish People "because of all the evil it has done in turning to other gods."

But the Bible also speaks of another kind of *hester panim*, when suffering is not a result of divine punishment but springs from the wickedness and cruelty of man. A striking example is Psalm 44:

"In God have we gloried all day long, and we will praise Thy Name forever, but now Thou hast rejected and humbled us... Thou hast given us up to be butchered like sheep and hast scattered us among the nations. All this has befallen us; yet we have not forgotten Thee and we have not betrayed Thy covenant, we have not gone back on our purpose and neither have our feet strayed from Thy path... Beatir Thyself. Why dost Thou sleep, Lord? Awake, do not reject us for ever. Why dost Thou hide Thy face, heedless of our misery and our sufferings? For we sink down to the dust and lie prone on the earth. Arise and come to our help, and set us free for Thy love's sake."

The *hester panim* of the Psalmist refers to a state of divine indifference to afflictions which are caused by wicked men. Deuteronomy's "hiding of the face" is caused by the sins of Israel and is described in Jewish traditional prayers as *mipnei hatelevut*, because of our sins. But when the "hiding of the face" is not a divine judgment, it is, in Prof. Berkovits' words, "God hiding himself mysteriously from the cry of the innocent." To be "forgotten" by God is not a punishment for sins. To be abandoned means that we experience divine indifference towards human predicament. Prof. Berkovits rejects what he calls "the simplistic theory of history" that explains all suffering by the principle of *mipnei hatelevut*. And he insists that all times "men of faith knew that human suffering was not to be explained by divine punishment alone." They knew that God was often "silent" in history.

IF MAN IS TO BE HUMAN, God must absent himself from history and respect man's freedom of decision. There is an awesome risk in God's silence and absence. For man left to his free decision is capable of goodness and wickedness. God will therefore not withdraw His providence from the world He created and He is both silent and active:

"He must be present in history. That man may be, God must absent Himself; that man may not perish in the tragic absurdity of his own making, God must remain present. The God of history must be absent and present concurrently... Because of the necessity of His absence, there is the hiding of the face and the suffering of the innocent. Because of the necessity of His presence, evil will not ultimately triumph. Because of it, there is hope for man."

And yet, Prof. Berkovits does not suggest that the theology of suffering and divine absence is an "answer" to the questions arising out of the Holocaust. He argues that this theology enables the Jew to understand himself and his role in history. The Holocaust is unlike anything the Jewish People experienced in its long history, but it also cannot be torn out of Jewish history. It occurred after several thousands of years of Jewish history and it marked its indelible impact upon the

future of our nation. But this future is also shaped by the amazing fact that our generation has experienced both Holocaust and national regeneration. Placing the Holocaust in a historical context does not "solve" problems, for the Holocaust was unique in all of mankind's experience.

What Prof. Berkovits advances in his book is not a rationale which will enable us to understand the Holocaust, but "a frame of reference for the world history of the Jewish People within which the European Jewish (Destruction) of the Jewish People has to be recognized." Within the wider setting of history the questions are no less painful, but these utterly dark years of vicious horror are viewed from the perspective of a long history of vicissitudes which culminated in the most unthinkable extermination and was then paradoxically followed by national revival. The perspective does not assuage the pain but it shows the Jew against a cosmic backdrop. He is not alone and absurd and meaningless but lives from generation to generation in faith and hope and in constant and agonizing search for the purpose of human life.

IT IS WITH THIS FAITH that man confronts God and demands justice, for it is his faith that compels man to challenge God and shout: "The judge of all the earth shall not do justice!" (Genesis 18:25). The faith of the "impudent" challenger, Abraham, is so all-pervading that it plunges him to a state of utter humility, of being mere "dust and ashes." (Genesis 25:27).

Prof. Berkovits writes: "The man of faith questions God because of his faith. It is the faith of Abraham in God that cannot tolerate injustice on the part of God. This is also the essence of Job's dilemma. The sustained fire of his plaint is not derived from his personal plight, but from the passion of his faith" (page 68). And equally, the hope for the future of man can spring only from the faith that despite God's silence and absence there is also throughout history the distinctive divine presence and guidance that evil will not ultimately succeed. God reveals His presence in history in the survival

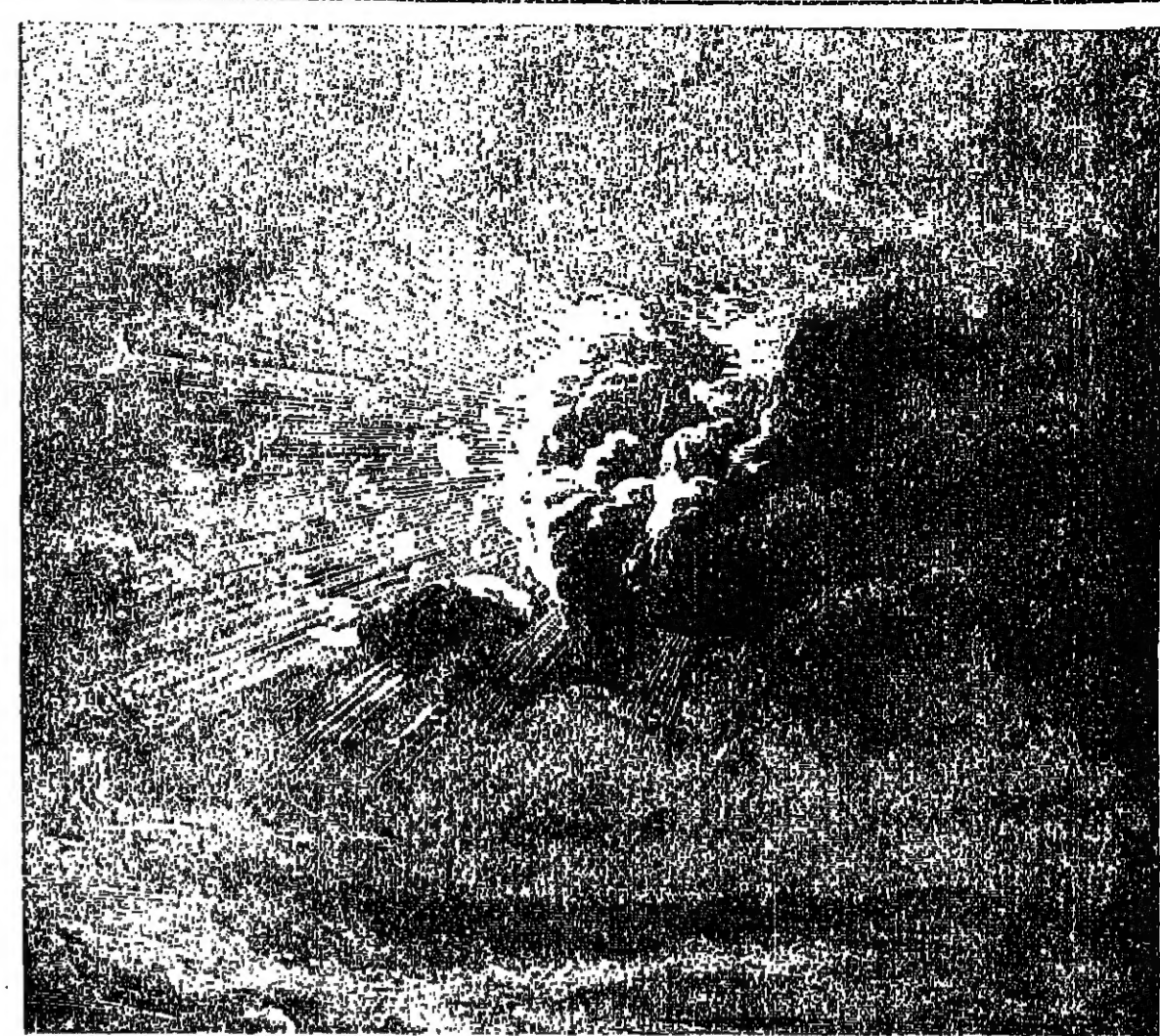
of the Jewish People. "Because of the survival of Israel the prophets could question God's justice and yet believe in Him."

THERE IS DIGNITY and courage in Prof. Berkovits' subdued writing, which is suffused with clenched-fist anger and reverent humility. The Holocaust was a world all of its own and those who were not there cannot respond except in a vicariously unreal and inauthentic manner.

"Many who were there lost their faith. I can understand that. A hell fiercer than Dante's was their lot. I believe that God himself understands and does not hold their loss of faith against them. Such is my faith in God. Can I therefore adopt their attitude for myself and rebel and reject? I was not there myself. I am not Job. I am only his brother. I cannot reject because there were others, too, in the thousands, in the tens of thousands, who were there and did not lose their faith; who accepted what happened to them in awesome submission to the will of God... How dare I reject if they accepted? Neither can I accept. I who was not there, because I was not there, dare not accept, dare not submit, because my brothers in their tens of thousands, who did go through that hell, did rebel and did reject. How dare I, who was not there, accept their superhuman suffering, and submit to it in faith?"

The faith is holy; but so also is the disbelief and the religious rebellion of the concentration camps. We must believe because our brother Job believed; and we must question because our brother Job so often could not believe any longer. This is not a comfortable situation; but it is our condition in this era after the Holocaust.

PROF. BERKOVITS WRITES not only of holy faith but also of "holy loss of faith." People who were not there stand at the threshold, and it is from this threshold alone that there can be a response to the Holocaust which shall not involve "the desecration of the holy faith or of the holy loss of faith" of the Jews who were there. And he fully understands the far-reaching implications of a theological statement on the holiness of the loss of faith by the



'And God saw that it was good.' (Genesis 1). Engraving by Gustav Doré.

people who went through that hell on earth. Can faith, he asks, survive the "strain placed on it by the catastrophe of our generation?"

He presents a cogent and forthright argument that the Holocaust is unique in human experience and that it also derives from the human predicament, and that the divine responsibility extends to all creation, the evil as well as the good. He insists upon the theological significance of the prophetic statement which lays down the principle that God is the *only* creator and that He is therefore also the creator of evil: "I am the Lord, there is no other. I make the light and I create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things" (Isaiah 45:6-7).

Prof. Berkovits rejects indignantly the neo-Platonic tradition — which was upheld by Maimonides and Sa'adiah Gaon — that evil is only the absence of good, as darkness is merely the absence of light. He writes: "The evil that created the ghettos and death camps and ruled them with an iron fist was no mere absence of the good. It was real, potent, absolute." After the Holocaust it has become certain that those "naïve and well-meaning" neo-Platonic notions about evil are untenable. So we must return to the stark and rigorous faith of Isaiah. And it is this prophetic faith which arouses the prophets to "contend with God" and cry out against wickedness. The Prophet Jeremiah (12:1) disputes and contends with God about the prosperity of the wicked, and he conducts his dispute *because of his unassailable faith in God*.

Faith after the Holocaust is not only an agonising theological problem. It causes the steadily-gathering assumptions of classical theology to appear to be insensitive to the real agonies of human life in a world in which evil cannot be simply argued out of existence. We do not want explanations that are too polished. We want them rough, lumpy, wrinkled. And above all we want them to be steeped in a humility which almost borders on nihilism. Before we begin to speak, we assume a wrenching silence. Before we approach and explain, we grieve and lament. "Remember, O Lord, what has befallen us. Look, and see our shame." (Lamentations, 5:1).

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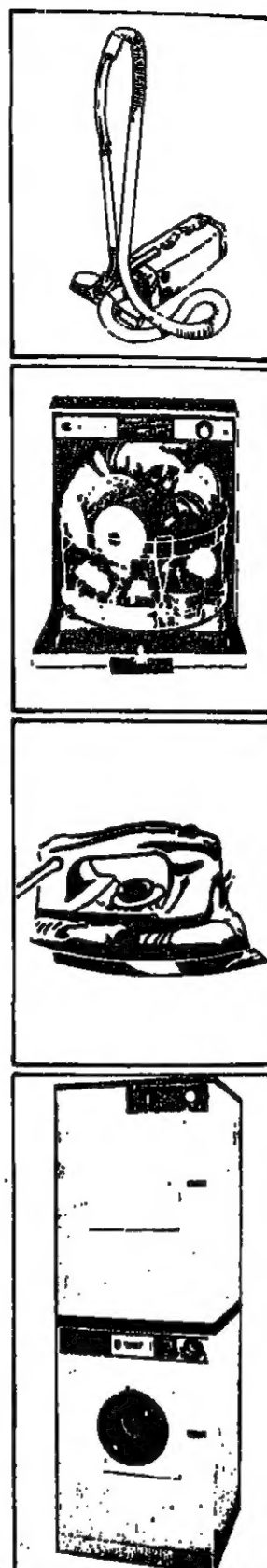
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A legal scholar looks at the Talmud

TALMUDIC LAW AND THE MODERN STATE by Moshe Silberg. Translated from the Hebrew by Ben Zion Bokser. Edited by Marvin S. Wiener. N.Y., Burning Bush Press. XIII + 224 pp. \$7.95.

Aaron Kirschenbaum

FROM TIME immemorial, the hallmark of the Jewish home has been neither the picture of a bearded patriarch on the living room wall nor the ceremonial candelabrum as a centerpiece in the dining room — not even the distinctive smells of the traditional cuisine. To the perceptive observer, the dominant characteristic of a truly Jewish home has been a unique life-style, the product of obedience and innumerable do's and don'ts. Hasidic or Mitnagdic, Kabbalistic or rationalistic, Ashkenazic or Sephardic, Oriental Jews, who were loyal to Judaism, wherever they may have lived, were first and foremost human beings who conducted their lives according to Halacha — the historical code of behavior that encompasses civil and criminal law, ethical and moral law, religious and ritual law.

Thus, one who does not understand the Halacha, who has not studied it, who has not been exposed to it, must be regarded as a stranger to historical Judaism.

These claims are extravagant, but every historian will corroborate them. The student of Jewish history knows that central to Jewish life was the study of the Talmud, that literary corpus containing the teachings, discussions and debates on Jewish law and lore which have been carried on over the ages. Indeed, the Talmud is a veritable laboratory of creative religious, ethical — moral and legal thinking.

But the Talmud is a closed book. Unpunctuated, unvocalized, written in idiomatic Rabbinic Hebrew and in Aramaic, unique in its terminology and in-group in its concepts, a literal translation of its text is mystifying and incomprehensible. Thus the monumental Soncino translation of the Talmud frequently resorts to paraphrases, parenthetical elucidations and explanatory footnotes. More ambitious attempts to storm the locked gates of the Talmud have been launched in recent years: in Hebrew, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz and his staff, and in English, Dr. A.Z. Blumenthal and the staff of the *Shema Mishpat*, are publishing individual tractates and chapters of the Talmud with voluminous commentary — modern in content and pedagogy in formulation.

The task, however, is even greater. For true translation does not limit itself to the task of leading its reader from one language to another; it undertakes to guide him from one universe of discourse to another. The translation of the Talmud, therefore, is nothing less than the presentation of post-Biblical ideas and thought processes to students nurtured on the latest advances in technology, on the nuances of existential philosophy and literature, and on the ambivalences of modern law and social service.

MOSHE SILBERG has undertaken this exacting job of true translation, has acquitted himself most impressively, and has shown the way for others to follow. Dr. Silberg is well suited for the task. An eminent jurist, Silberg was on the bench of the Supreme Court of Israel from 1969 to 1970, the last five years as Deputy President. Moreover, he taught the law of personal status — that area of Israeli law most influenced by Jewish law — at the Hebrew University Law School for 15 years. A profound interpreter of Talmudic law, his deep understanding of Rabbinic thinking stems from those years he studied in the yeshivot of Mir, Slobodka and Novardok combined with the legal studies he pursued thereafter. It must

be remembered, after all, that although philological, historical, even textual research of the Talmud is helpful and often illuminating, the Talmud is essentially legal in nature and the Rabbinic were primarily students of the Law; hence it is the legal scholar who is best equipped to understand and interpret the teachings of the Talmudic sages. In 1952 Justice Silberg delivered a lecture in memory of Judah Leib Magnes which he called "Hok Umusar Bamishpat Ha'Ivri" and which was subsequently translated for the "Harvard Law Review" (75 (1961) 806) as "Law and Morals in Jewish Jurisprudence." In this lecture, which served as the basis of chapters VI and VII in the book under review, Dr. Silberg brilliantly propounds the thesis that, in contrast to the Roman and the Anglo-American legal system which adhere themselves to the citizen as the locus of rights, Jewish law addresses itself to the citizen as the bearer of duties. Debt, for example, must be paid. But is the court primarily concerned with the indebtedness of the claimant or with the religious-moral obligation of the debtor?

ment and exact delimitation is most annoying because of its pettiness. If we keep in mind Prof. Silberg's masterly thesis of Judaism as a "duties"-oriented system of law, we are quick to perceive the shallowness of our annoyance. "The secular law can allow itself to invoke abstract criteria, imprecise and obscure, such as 'reasonable care,' 'reasonable behavior,' 'proximate cause,' 'reasonable time,' which the judge in a specific litigation will bring down to concreteness and convert into tangible terms. For here generally the non-payment of a debt or the failure to meet an obligation is not a transgression and the maximum that the guilty party faces is the payment of compensation and the cost of litigation. But this is not so in Jewish law, because it is by nature a religious law, does not define norms for deciding the law, but norms of behavior. The one who owes pays from him without justification, is not forgiven by paying damages which he caused by his action. For the claimant he must know at the outset how to act, and for this kind of precise knowledge there is no other source but a law which is clear and explicit."

Only the Jewish God could be a God of Justice. Polytheism, which sees the world as controlled by independent forces ("gods" and "god-deesses") in disarray and in conflict with one another, could never produce a code of behavior to direct interpersonal behavior between people. "Ethical polytheism" is a contradiction in terms. (The source of ethics among the Greeks was philosophy, not religion.) Monotheism makes possible the concept of a God of Justice. The "Shema Yisrael" prayer thus becomes the expression of a pledge of allegiance to the Heavenly King and His Law. But if God is true to this essence, the rule of law is His rule as well. "Shall the Judge of the world not do justice?" (Genesis 18:25). The ancient Talmud contrasts the human king who places himself above the law with the Divine King Who obeys the law. The rule of law thus

ONE IS REMINDED of the classical introduction of youngsters to the Talmud. The second chapter of Tractate Bava Metza, "Eilu Metzilot," devoted to the law of lost articles, is obsessed with the duty of the finder to return the lost article to its owner; "finders keepers" is at best an afterthought. The Jewish religion, by making the ordering of society the prime concern of man in the street and by seeing in the law the regulative discipline of man's relations with God as well as with his fellow-man considers law too important to be the exclusive domain of judges, lawyers, and even rabbis. The study of law becomes a prime mitzva of the citizen at large — a doctrine that out-democratizes democracy, for it seeks to create an identity between the citizen and the moral-legal foundation of society. How repugnant Talmudic formalism appears to modern man. The preoccupation with minute measure-



takes on cosmic significance. In the light of this pervading principle, as expounded by Prof. Silberg, the *agada* that God puts on Tefillin takes on meaning of unexpected grandeur.

The student of legal reasoning will revel in Silberg's chapter on "Casualistic Form." Why does the Talmud sometimes illustrate its laws with grotesque and absurd examples (e.g., "If one joined two wombs of two animals to each other and the foetus issued from one womb and entered the other" — Hullin 70a)? After explaining the role of *ulama* in the restrictive interpretation of an authoritative text — in promoting freedom of innovation, Prof. Silberg goes on to point out:

"Precisely because the Gemara employs the casualistic approach, where the general, abstract principle has to be derived from the particular case, through use of the inductive method, the Gemara has to make sure that the particular case which served to exemplify the general principle was 'monistic' in character, that is to say that the case exemplified one and only one legal principle to the exclusion of all others. And this was often only possible through the construction of these drastic and artificial examples. The advantage of a hypothetical, artificially constructed case over a real life situation is that in such a case it was possible, in an artificial manner, to eliminate all accidentals that is, all the incidental details that usually accompany the real life situation — and thus isolate, free from all extraneous considerations, the legal principle that it wished the case to exemplify as being the sole determining factor in the decision rendered."

Justice Silberg's book is not out to pick up the eccentricities of the Halacha and to apologetically explain them away. Rather his purpose is to interpret the Talmud in the light of the best in legal thinking; Talmudic contradictions then turn out to be of surprising significance, giving the modern reader pause for thought and enriching him with deeper insights into both life and the Law.

THE CHAPTERS entitled, "The Law and its Rationality," "Law and Morality," "Law and Equity" are classical examples of true translation — from one universe of discourse to another. A student of the Talmud, interested in Judaism and curious about the Halacha, can ill afford to be without them.

The last chapter, "At The Crossroads," deals with the place of Jewish law in the State of Israel and constitutes both the author's plea for a greater role to be given to Talmudic law in the Israeli legal system and his proposal as to how this can be achieved. It is this chapter which justified the title given in English to this volume.

THE BOOK WAS originally published in Hebrew under the title "Kach Darko shel Talmud" (literally "This is the way of the Talmud," a play on Avot 6:4). The present volume is a masterful translation. It is the work of Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser of Forest Hills, N.Y., in his own right a writer of popular and scholarly works on Judaism and gifted translator of Jewish liturgy. Rabbi Bokser is sensitive to the nuances of the original, and most accurate in finding the English equivalent for technical terms and concepts uniquely Talmudic. This is no mean accomplishment. Silberg is not easy to translate. He is rich in idiom and reveals in puns and allusions, the translator often wisely ignores Silberg's play on words, to render them in English would make the passage clumsy and unreadable, or would necessitate notes and explanations that would be out of place. Discussing the advantage of the litigant who is in actual possession for example, Silberg writes and Bokser translates:

"The one who holds possession has the advantage, *benif possidentis*! Whoever holds possession — this is the measure of the law!" The words in quotation marks are an ingenious play on the first line of the "Vechol Ma'amalim" *piyut* in the High Holy Day prayerbook. Rabbi Bokser exercised good judgment in refraining from displaying his own erudition. As a result, the book reads smoothly, the language is lucid, the thought is clear.

The author, the translator, and the Burning Bush Press are to be congratulated for they have combined to produce a work that represents an authentic contribution to a deeper understanding of Jewish law, the Talmud, and — thereby — of historical, traditional Judaism.

Aaron Kirschenbaum is Associate Professor of Jewish Law at the Tel Aviv University Law School.

Now People

Malcolm Cowley

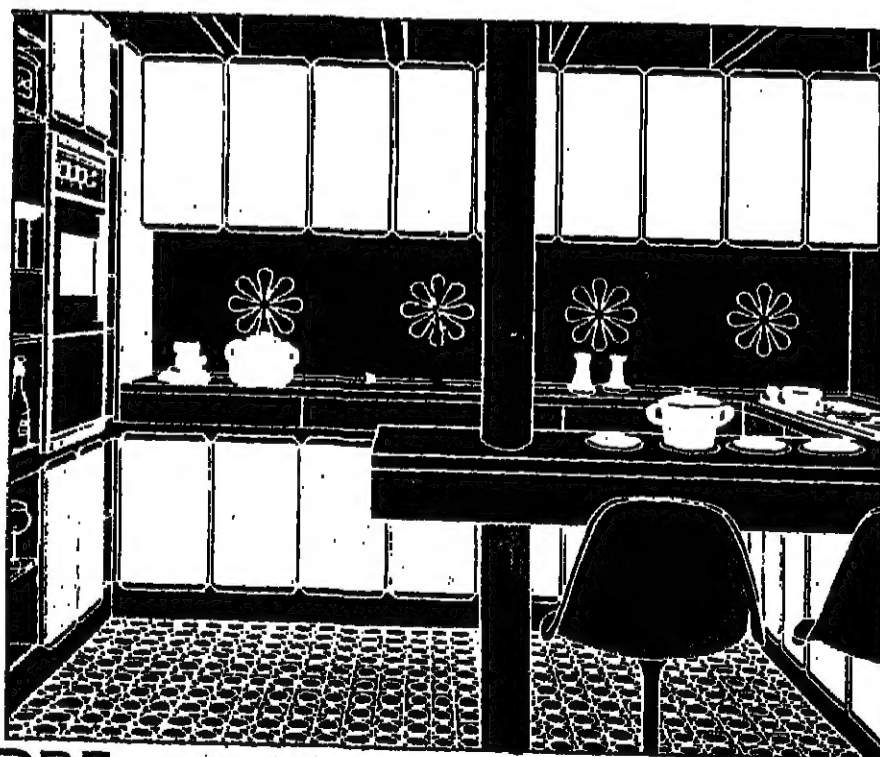
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN to our complicated civilization if everyone chose to live minute by minute? But the question has to be left hanging. All I wanted to point out is that the minute-by-minute people, the Now people (who are only part of a generation), can serve as characters in stories, but they can't tell stories.

A story depends on the past and looks toward the future. It does not satisfy the Now people's desire for instant stimulus, instant perception, instant euphoria. Rather, it embodies the very old ideal of deferred gratification: deferred for the author because he works patiently to produce effects that may not be perceived for months or years (granted that the story is printed and read); deferred for the reader because he continues from page to page in hope of a final illumination or release of tension. In whatever form it may be told — in fiction, drama, moving picture, narrative poem, or non-fiction novel — a good story is an intelligible and lasting shape carved out of time.

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The victory of Nahmanides

THE DISPUTATION. London, Scholarly Publications. xvi + 332 pp. £3-1L35.

Joseph Halpern

THIS EXTRAORDINARY book is obviously the work of a many-sided scholar. He uses the famous 13th-century disputation between Rabbi Moses ben Nahman (Nahmanides, or Ramban as he is called in Jewish literature) and the Church as a setting in which to examine all the old problems — and the modern ones. In other words, the controversy of the past is carried forward into the present to prove the authenticity of the Jewish Bible and to rebut the Christian Bible.

To the anonymous author attack is the best form of defence, and it is fascinating to watch his brilliant scientific and logical mind at work. The original Disputation was ordered by King James I of Aragon and took place in the royal castle at Barcelona, just over 700 years ago. Free speech was granted, Nahmanides was victorious, and the King was so impressed with his brilliant defence of Judaism that he sent him away with a generous gift. Nahmanides' concluding remarks are quoted at the end of the book, and are as valid today as then. It is a bitter commentary on our times that he was able to speak so scathingly in front of his challengers when in more than half the world today much less would mean certain death.

But this is only the setting for our author to raise all the modern questions — and others not usually asked — and to seek to solve them all. He bases himself solely on knowledge and reason, completely discarding blind faith, he contends, is necessary only for Christianity, for obvious reasons. He also shows that atheism, too, is a faith and no less illogical.

His attack on Christianity begins half way through the third chapter (atheism being demolished in the first half), and he pinpoints its faults by devastating quotations from its own sources and the whole of the New Testament, from Matthew to Revelations. He shows the theologians what they have missed,



what their religion entails, and why its history is so wrong and so bloody. The whole text is completely documented, and the scholarship immense and detailed.

The subject is actually outlined in the Summary of the Six Days at the beginning and the three appendices at the end. The First Day deals with Mathematical and Scientific certainty of Master Mind behind Nature. No alternative. Texts quoted, examined and criticised.

tions of Christianity, its Theology and History critically examined. Quotations throughout from Christian and other sources.

The Fifth Day (by far the longest section, no less than 140 pages) — Detailed examination of New Testament text itself from beginning to end, chapter by chapter, from Matthew to Revelations, laying bare much already known to scholars, much only hinted at, plus new material pinpointed by the Rabbi, and deliberate falsities in the new editions. The whole, as shown by the text itself, a damning condemnation of Christianity and its theology.

The Sixth Day — The Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus. Old and recent theories brought. Old fallacies and mysteries cleared up. Minute examination of texts. Hoary mistakes, never previously noted, exposed. Scientific material examined. What did happen? The Truth at last. The replacement of Christianity by universal religion of Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of all mankind.

Appendix I is an Explanation of Nazism and the Jews. Appendix II deals with the Shroud of Turin. Scientific examination. A fake. Appendix III gives Prophecies of Messiah contrasted with Jesus. Appendix IV is on The Future as indicated in Biblical Prophecy. Unfortunately, it is to be published later, and two blank pages are left for it.

The book is written in simple language, and even in the most advanced and technical subjects the articles quoted have been chosen for their simplicity and clarity.

In times past thousands of Jews willingly endured martyrdom rather than embrace Christianity. It is sad, dealing to realise that missionaries today appear to be gaining converts among our youth, even in Israel, so that there is talk of banning them. A better way is to get our youth, the more intelligent the better, to read and study this book. It is already being used as a basis for study in many circles both in Israel and abroad, and it will have achieved its purpose if it stops the rot in Jewish life.

One word of criticism. There are one or two misplaced passages, besides the usual quota of printers' errors. Nevertheless, the publishers are to be congratulated on a well-produced and well-bound volume that is worthy of its subject.

Joseph Halpern is Chairman of the Bible Readers Union and part-time Librarian at Bar-Ilan University.

Rosh Hashana

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fresh all
year long

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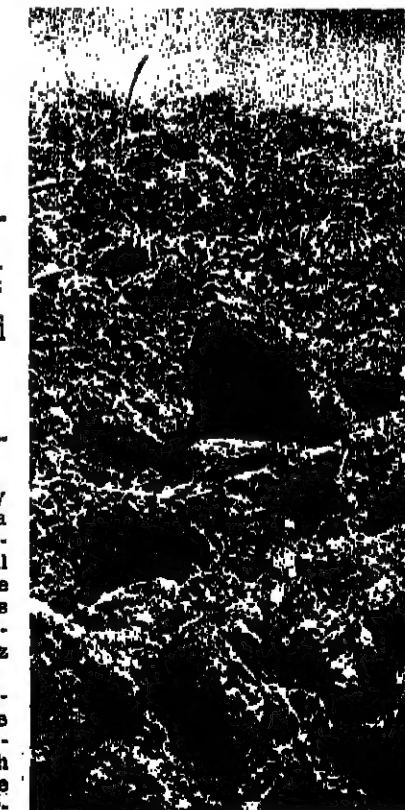
The Good Earth

SHEMITA: Mekorot, Hagut, Mehkar (שמיטה — מקורות, חגות, מהקאר Sources, Reflections and Research), edited by Zuriel Admonit. Tel Aviv, "Amana." 210 pp.

Abraham Goldberg

COMMANDMENTS WHICH apply only to Eretz Yisrael make up a considerable part of the 613 Commandments. The fact that almost all the agricultural commandments have application only in this country has been an important element in emphasizing the centrality of Eretz Yisrael throughout Jewish history.

Many of these agricultural commandments are centred around the observance of the Shemita or Sabbatical Year (the year 5738, which has just ended, was one). In the Second Temple period the observance of the Sabbatical Year played a very important part in both shaping the character of the Jewish nation and helping to preserve the fruitfulness of the land. During the rebirth of intensive Jewish agricultural activity in Eretz Yisrael somewhat less than 100 years ago, the



a vast polemical literature both here and in the Diaspora.

THE PROPER OBSERVANCE of the Shemita year can be a well of religious inspiration, as is the weekly Sabbath. Yet the problem has been handled in the past century in such a way that it has tended to lose all religious significance except for a very few. Economic necessity undoubtedly has been an important factor in forcing the official Rabbinate to seek various loopholes for permitting agricultural work during the Sabbatical year. But this has been at a price to the Jewish heritage.

There are, therefore, many today who are concerned with salvaging as much as possible, in our modern conditions of living, of the religious significance of the Sabbatical year for the Jew in Israel. One of the finest efforts in this respect is this little volume put out with the help of the Education and Culture Ministry's Tora Culture Department. As the present Shemita year now draws to its close, this little book helps highlight how much opportunity for religious gain has been missed and how to start thinking now so that the next Shemita year seven years from now will not remain a nothing.

The editor has attempted to deal with the Shemita year from the aspects of past, present, future. He has divided the volume into three main sections: sources, polemical writing and research. He has carefully culled from the best writing on the subject of the Sabbatical year

during the present and recent generations. Thus, he has included selections from the writings of David Hoffman, Rabbi Kook, Rabbi E. Melekh Bar-Shaul and, from the living, from Rabbi Moshe Zvi Neriyah and Yehuda Amichai as well as from kabbalistic thinkers like Dov Raphael.

An important article by Yehoshua Cohen shows that the observance of the Shemita year in the Second Temple period was a viable commandment and strictly kept. The inherent possibilities in its modern meanings — especially as a year devoted to study and learning by the general population — are well pointed out by articles by the editor and others.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST are the excerpts from the various "Shemita" letters of the late Rabbi Kook where, while he points out the need to relax the stringencies of Shemita observance because of the economic urgencies of the moment, he at the same time writes with poetic and inspired fervor of the great religious benefits to be derived in the future from a full and proper observance of the Shemita regulations.

Almost all the writers emphasize the importance of establishing the Sabbatical Year as one for study and spiritual renewal for the general population. Indeed, a few of the religious kibbutzim have already done so for their members. It is undoubtedly true that it is the emphasis on the many positive ways of observance latent in the Sabbatical year which will bring about any revival, if at all.

הקדמת השמיטה



happy
listening
in the
new year
SONY®

A CASUAL visitor meeting Nissim and Ruth would never guess that both were raised on a staple diet of bread and jam or that they had slept on boxes for beds. They make as attractive a young couple as one could hope to meet anywhere: he lithe, lean, self-reliant in manner yet gentle and courteous in speech; she pretty, mettlesome, her eyes flashing and her hands emphasising her points as she speaks. Ashkenazi? Sephardi? Who can say? They are typical young Israelis, a credit to their country.

Their home confirms this impression. True, they have only a one-roomed apartment in a slum area of the Holy City. But with it goes a small patio, the roof of the apartment below; they have painted the walls bright, clean colours, potted plants to add a touch of greenery. Their single room contains a large divan-bed, with a bright cover hand-woven by Ruth; who also makes her own clothes. The chairs and tables are original in design: Nissim made them himself. He can do anything in the world with his hands — he even made his own radio set. In fact, he made everything in the room except the TV, which they bought. A tiny back porch has been turned into his workshop. The small kitchen is spotless: if one so desired, one could eat off the floor.

Conspicuously absent is any suggestion of Sephardi culture, despite the fact that Nissim's parents came from Iran, Ruth's from the island of Jerba, off Tunisia.

Nissim comes from a family of five boys and five girls still living — he himself does not know how many others were born and died. His father came to Israel from Iran, many years ago. The family lived in Petah Tikva, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem — the high point in his father's life was when he was a pedlar of nuts in Tel Aviv, with David Ben-Gurion as one of his customers. After the family moved to Jerusalem, the father worked as a street-cleaner until he died three years ago. Many years before the mother had become mentally unstable, and had been permanently hospitalized.

HOW DID the family grow up? "Frankly, I don't know," says Nissim. "We slept in banana boxes. To some extent we helped each other. Of course, we had no games or clothes to speak of, just the bare necessities. But I don't remember going hungry. There was food: bread, margarine, jam, soup. The Ministry of Social Welfare helped us a lot."

Several of the children were sent by the Ministry to kibbutzim in their teens, in the framework of Youth Aliya; one of his sisters married in the kibbutz, and is still there. One brother is a foreman in a factory, another works as a technician at the Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Centre, a third is employed on the maintenance of gas installations. One sister married an Egged driver, another is also a housewife in Jerusalem, yet another, divorced, works in a factory.

"How many is that?" He counts on his fingers. "We are almost a football team. Oh yes, there's my sister who's studying nursing at Hadassah. That makes eight. My little brother is working with me in the factory where I'm employed. So that's the lot. We all feel very close to each other."

RUTH INTERPOSES:

"We have a full football team — there are eleven of us. My father came from Jerba in 1949, with four children; he did some sort of work there, I don't know what. (Nissim: "In Israel he became a student!") My mother worked on and off as a cleaner up to eight years ago.

Ruth's family story is much the same as Nissim's — grinding poverty, enough food to keep them alive, complete reliance on the Ministry of Social Welfare and



Children of the full quivers

"Happy is the man who hath his quiver full...." Many people in Israel, especially among the older generation of Oriental immigrants, still echo the Bible's praise of large families. But in the eyes of many younger people the blessing is not an unmixed one. PHILIP GILLON interviews Nissim and Ruth, a young Jerusalem couple who are not prepared to have as many children as they have siblings.

the institutions. One senses in her far more bitterness than in her young husband: she obviously resented her parents' feeble fertility, and their inattention to the welfare of the brood. On one occasion, the older children tried to preach some sort of family planning to their parents, but their mother howled them down.

One brother works for the Government in Sinai; he is married and comes home to his family whenever possible. A sister is a teacher and is married to another brother. Another sister has three children and is a housewife in Tel Aviv. A brother has a small business in Jerusalem, a sister works as a clerk, a brother is in the Army. One young brother is at a religious boarding-school, another is just starting at the Wizo school in Rehovot to which Ruth herself went. One girl lives with the parents in Katamon and goes to high school. Somehow or

other, all the children have survived.

"THE PARENTS of us both were very religious," says Nissim, "but all my family are non-observant. One of my sisters keeps a kosher home. But we all travel on Shabbat. We don't believe in religion in the way our parents did."

"Three of my family remained really religious," says Ruth, "perhaps because they went to religious schools. Nissim and I, of course, are non-observant."

NISSIM COMPLETED nine grades of schooling; then he went to work as an apprentice in a factory. His main work was carpentry, but he proved to have skilful hands and an adept brain; he picked up electronics and electrical work as well. He remained in the factory until he turned 18, and then did his army service as an infantryman in the Golan

Brigade. When he was demobilized, he returned to his old factory. After four years, the factory closed down, but an engineer from the firm arranged work for him as a technical instructor in an Ort School. After six months, somebody who had known him from the old factory helped to set up a new firm, and at once sent for him. He has worked there ever since, and earns about IL1,100 a month, depending on how much overtime he does.

Ruth finished 11 years at the Wizo vocational school, specializing in weaving. "Things were so bad at home that children like me were not sent home for holidays," she says.

Considering the difficulties in her background, the school has reason to be proud of her, but she herself is by no means satisfied, and is hungry for further education — so much so that she takes payment in English lessons

from one of the women who employs her as a household help. Otherwise, her work brings in a few hundred pounds a month to supplement Nissim's earnings.

AS KEY-MONEY for their one-roomed flat, they gave the astonishing sum of IL20,000, and pay IL24 a month in rent — a reflection of the peculiarity of Israel's housing policy. In any Western country, so stable and deserving a couple would have been helped by a building society or mortgage loan bank to purchase a real home.

How did they raise the IL20,000? "We saved IL10,00 before we married," says Nissim. "None of our brothers and sisters could help much with cash, but they helped all they could with guarantees. So we were able to borrow here and there, from banks and so on."

What rate of interest are they paying? He shrugs: "Twenty per cent, I think."

They will have paid off the flat by 1974. Then they intend to borrow again — to buy a larger refrigerator, a washing-machine, and — if ever their ship comes sailing home — to make a down payment on a young couple's flat, for which they have made an application to the Ministry of Housing.

"We didn't even get an acknowledgment of our letter," says Rachel, "but we're hoping."

The way they are planning their lives, they can look forward to an endless vista of debts, carrying interest at rates that at one time would have been branded as usurious, but are now perfectly legal. Aren't they frightened of such monstrous burdens?

"Of course not," says Ruth. "How else can anyone in Israel save money?"

WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN? They have been married a year, and their quivers are still empty. Ruth's face hardens.

"We are not going to do to our children what was done to us. We may have two, a maximum of three — when we can afford to bring them up properly."

Nissim says: "Two will be ample."

His siblings have had five, four, two and one children; hers have had three and one. But, they stress, none of them has had children without being able to care for them properly.

Despite all their troubles and struggles, theirs is basically a success story: all 21 children grew up and settled down or are settling down, obviously assets to Israeli society. Nissim's and Ruth's own story is a very positive one; both of them are making good. Why, then, are they so resolutely opposed to large families?

"We oppose large families without adequate means to bring them up!" declares Ruth angrily. "You call ours a success story, but you don't realize how hard it was, growing up like that. A child shouldn't be exposed to such a life. We certainly won't let our children suffer the same way."

THEY HAVE many friends, both Sephardim and Ashkenazim — Israelis — with whom they exchange visits. For the rest of their recreation, they watch television, or, occasionally, go to a cinema, even a theatre. For the most part, however, they stay at home and work, he at making furniture, she at sewing.

Are they satisfied with their lives?

Nissim says, "Yes, I'd say I'm satisfied. I work hard, but I like it. We're happy."

But Ruth demurs.

"Nissim, how can you say we're satisfied? It's still very hard to be a young couple in Israel with nobody to help. Some of our friends get a start through aid from their parents. We have to do everything with our own hands. It's not an easy life or an easy prospect. No, I'm certainly not satisfied."



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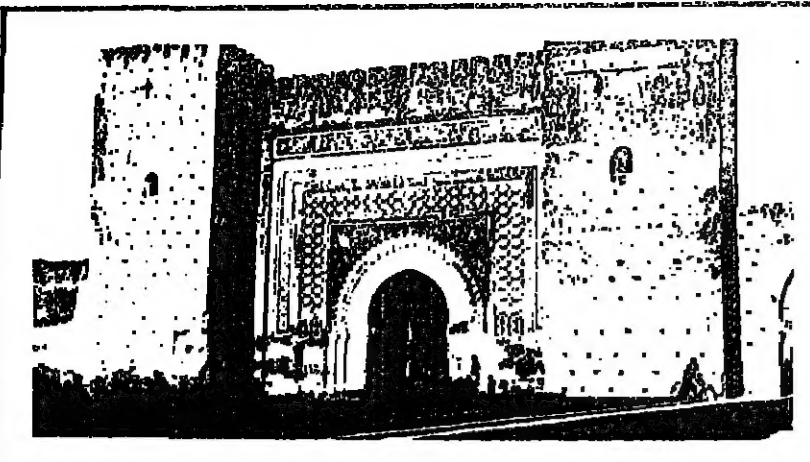


PEACE AND FREEDOM FOR THEM AND FOR ALL OF ISRAEL

Like these newcomers from Soviet Russia, thousands of immigrants have been turned into productive citizens during the past year through the economic development program financed with the aid of Israel Bonds. For them, for the Jews who will arrive in the coming year, and for all of Israel we hope the New Year will bring peace, freedom and security.

Shana Tova.

STATE OF ISRAEL BONDS



In the Mellah of Marrakech

There are few Jews left in Morocco, and most of these are preparing to leave, as JAMES KRAUS, one of the rare Jewish visitors from abroad, discovered when he spent some time, recently, in the mellahs of Morocco. In this article he describes his visit with pen and camera.

THE GATES of the Marrakech mellah are no longer shut at sunset as they were until 13 years ago, although half a dozen Jewish families and many single, elderly people still live inside its walls. From the Djemma el Fna, the main square of Marrakech, with its African dancers, snake charmers and street vendors, I walked down through the narrow lanes of the mellah, the crowded old city. Suddenly, the road opened into a small square. To the right, a passageway led into a large courtyard, bordered by window after window of gleaming gold and silver bracelets, coral necklaces and chased Arab daggers. To the left stood an imposing mud-brick gate that pierced a rampart more than 30 feet high. This was the Place des Ferblantiers, the Square of the Tinsmiths. And this walled city within a city was the mellah — the Jewish quarter.

I passed under the gate's thick arch and down the dusty Rue Saka (Street of the Tobacco Merchants), an alley barely wide enough for three persons to walk abreast. On each side, one-story buildings with ornately carved wooden doors showed crumbling facades and shaky balconies. Many, structurally unsound, have indeed fallen in recent years, their collapsing ceilings killing or crippling the occupants.

My guide, a young Marrakech Jew, led me past the horde of small Arab children who ran after us, calling out mockingly, "A la synagogue? A la synagogue?" We went up a worn, stone stairway and through a small door, and were suddenly inside the Atlas synagogue, built by Abraham Atlas more than 200 years ago and still owned by his family. Light poured in from the narrow upper windows, outlining the intricate Moorish carving of the ceiling and women's gallery. Glass oil-lamps, surmounted by tarnished "hands of Fatima," hung down over the benches and in front of a magnificently carved wooden Ark.

We walked out and into a nearby building where, in a characteristic Moroccan inner courtyard, open to the sky, two men sat vigorously thrashing raw wool. In a corner, an older woman stuffed the beaten wool into mattresses, which she then stitched tightly on a sewing machine.

"My husband has already been to Israel once," she told me with a smile. "We love Marrakech and we love our life here, but there is no future. Everything could change overnight and turn suddenly into a catastrophe."

My guide led me on through the narrow, dirt streets until we came to the high, whitewashed wall of the cemetery. We slipped through a narrow door into blinding sunlight. In front of us was a vast open space packed with white tombstones. Few bore any inscription and here, as in other mellah cemeteries, several layers of dead had been buried one atop the other. In a far corner, a low Arab clientele and the once holy rabbi and beside it sat an elderly Jew, watching over flickering candles and sacred incense. In Marrakech, as elsewhere in Morocco, the cult of rabbis has always been strong.

In a small courtyard next to

the tomb, aged figures in ragged dresses and tattered jellabas (burnouses) sat around listlessly. Only the erratic shriek of a mad woman broke the silence in which this small group of crippled and insane Jews waited out their last days.

"What will become of them?" I asked my guide.

"Who knows?" he answered. "Many refuse to go and insist on remaining here. Some will probably leave with the others."

We walked out of the sunlight and back into the streets of the mellah. In an instant, three Arab youths surrounded us.

"Ya Yahoudi," one said gruffly, "five francs for you to pass."

My guide opened his shirt and exposed his chest.

"Search me," he replied impassively. "If you find any money, it's yours."

The three stood frowning, uncertainly for a moment. Then, without a word, they parted to let us pass.

WE TURNED a corner, avoided a muddy pool of water spilled by children fighting to get at a fountain, and continued into the heart of the mellah. From the inner courtyard of a large building rose the chant of Hebrew phrases. First, the schoolmaster's voice rang out, followed by a chorus of voices echoing him in unison. The instructor, young, nervous and well educated, spoke to me in Hebrew. Two classes, *aleph* and *bet*, one for about 50 older children, the other for 20 very small ones, were held in rooms next to a disused synagogue. A "college," or high school, in the modern part of the city catered for the older youths. Many then went to continue their studies in Casablanca, in France or in other parts of the world.

A short distance away, another series of buildings housed a combined day-nursery, clinic, and home for the aged. Small children were playing in a brightly lit, immaculately clean, inner courtyard. "Future Israelis," an attendant said to me proudly, as she hugged two infants.

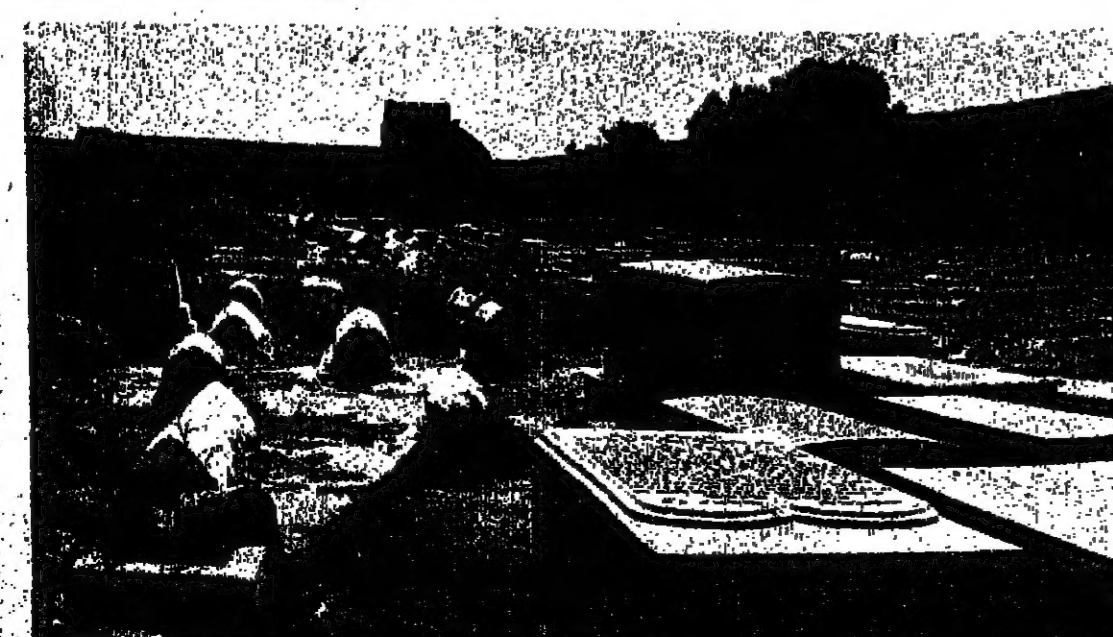
The centre is staffed by three nurses and cares for 80 toddlers whose parents are at work. It gives medical treatment to 100 inpatients and 130 outpatients, houses more than a hundred old people, and issues over 500 hot meals daily to the aged poor. In addition, one wing temporarily houses families forced to abandon their homes, either because these were structurally unsafe, or because they had become isolated in purely Arab sections where it was too dangerous to remain any longer.

On our way out we passed a small restaurant with the word "Kasher" boldly displayed in Hebrew letters. In Marrakech, as in other Moroccan cities, such places are still to be found serving the traditional, grilled meat and stuffed liver sausages with a spicy, red pepper sauce and kosher wine. Only now, the restaurants are largely filled with Arab clientele and the once holy atmosphere has been lost.

"What? Me pay you?" a drunken Moroccan customer shouted at the Jewish proprietor one night. "So you can send the money to Israel? You know who I am?" he continued, fumbling with his



Gateway leading to the old mellah, in Meknes. (Below) The cemetery of the mellah, Marrakech. Few tombs bear inscriptions.



(Right) The Jewish cemetery, Fez, with the mellah in background.



Aged Jews in the Marrakech mellah. (Below) The main street of the mellah, Fez, now occupied by Moslems.



wallet, "I'm the one who killed that Israeli colonel!"

Such incidents are far from uncommon and the Jews of Marrakech have long lived under difficult conditions, precariously and in fear of persecution.

THE WORD **MELLAH** itself means salt in the Arabic dialect of the Maghreb. For centuries Jews were compelled to pickle in brine the decapitated heads of the sultan's enemies before they were mounted on the city walls; and in derisory recognition of their status, their section of town was labelled the Salt Quarter.

The mellah of Marrakech, first established in 1558 and enlarged in the 1870s, is one of the oldest in Morocco. Elsewhere — in Rabat, Tetuan, El Jadid — mellahs were laid out well into the 19th century and served to confine the Jews as much as to protect them. As little as 15 years ago, there were more than 40,000 Jews in Marrakech. Today, perhaps 3,000 remain, the majority in Guella, the modern new city built by the French. Fifteen years ago, 50 synagogues served the Marrakech Jewish community. Today five remain open. The others, from their exteriors indistinguishable from the neighbouring buildings, are shuttered and locked and the keys to many, with their priceless ancient wooden arks, have been lost.

Like their synagogues, the Jewish residents have become submerged in the sea of poor Moslem families who occupied the quarter and turned it into a vast Arab slum after the restrictions prohibiting the entry of non-Jews were lifted in 1953.

IN OTHER CITIES, the pattern is much the same, but no one knows exactly how many Jews are now living in Morocco. The best estimates are that between 20,000 and 25,000 still remain, but emigration is reducing the number every month. The poor have largely gone. Those who have not yet left are, for the most part, well-to-do businessmen, doctors and proprietors.

The majority of Moroccan Jews, probably about 17,000 are now concentrated in Casablanca. One frequently comes across Jewish shoes and clothing stores in the commercial capital, as well as kosher butchers. But the streets of the old Jewish quarter between the Ziraoui and Moulay Youssef Boulevards have, as in Marrakech, become crowded with poor Arabs moving in from the countryside. Two synagogues in the quarter remain open. In other parts of the city, however, Jews prefer to hold services in private apartments, for fear of police agents who watch the streets around the synagogues, especially during Saturday services.

There is no fear in Casablanca, but the Jews are extremely cautious, as they must be, living in an intensely hostile Arab environment. Cinemas levy a tax that funnels funds to terrorist organizations and there is a daily barrage of anti-Israel material in the newspapers. Every Jewish door is triple-locked, and even the poorer families in the mellah have night-watchmen. No one has any doubt that should the Moroccan state be assassinated or deposed, guarded Jewish shops and institu-

every Jewish home will be ransacked within hours.

In Meknes, where about 1,700 Jews still remain, the atmosphere was much tenser. There, the warden of a synagogue complained that he is afraid to go out at night or to walk down certain streets for fear of being attacked by drunken Arabs.

"We can't carry on normal business," a Jewish merchant said to me. "If an Arab debtor fails to pay, no court will accept a Jewish claim. If a Jew is attacked, he will probably not only lose his case, but he will have to pay the costs as well."

There is a Hebrew school in the Meknes mellah and a "college" in the new city, but only seven of the 22 synagogues are still open. The Jewish population once numbered 25,000 and many Jews now want to leave cannot do so for lack of the money needed to bribe officials. Passports issued by the municipality are difficult to obtain, since Meknes, like Fez, is one of the old centres of Moroccan Arab nationalism and antagonism towards Jews is marked.

FEZ NOW HAS less than a thousand Jews, again for the most part, shopkeepers and proprietors of restaurants and businesses. One of the greatest centres of Jewish culture in North Africa, the Fez mellah was, until fairly recent times, virtually an autonomous city administered by a *Cheikh el Thoud* and a *mejliss* (council) of three rabbis and four laymen. Now, no trace of Jewish life remains, save for a few jewellers, and a community that existed for more than a thousand years has all but disappeared.

When I asked the owner of a kosher restaurant exactly how many Jews there still were in Fez, he regarded me suspiciously for a moment. Was I a police agent? An Arab trying to set a trap for him? He couldn't be sure. His hands twitched nervously as he shook a pill from a small container and swallowed it with a glass of water. "I don't know," he answered abruptly, and turned away.

There are some cities — Tetuan, Tangier, and Essaouira — where small communities of a few hundred still exist. But if the rate of departures continues, within five years, not a Jew will be left in Morocco. Most families have relatives abroad and are planning to join them. Older children are being sent out of the country on "extended vacations," to wait for their parents and younger brothers and sisters.

For the Jews in Morocco, security rests on two factors. The first is the internal political stability and the continued rule of the king, Hassan II, like his revered father, Mohammed V, a former Moroccan sultan, considers the Jews to be a vital, professional group under his personal protection. Few Jews were harmed following the Six Day War, in spite of widespread disturbances throughout Morocco. The king acted swiftly to suppress the Istiglal (Independence) Party's boycott of Jewish businesses and imprisoned the secretary-general of the Labour movement for talk of "Zionist domination of the Jewish community of the Moroccan state." Armed troops king be assassinated or deposed, guarded Jewish shops and institu-

tions, and in many cases escorted Jews to schools and synagogues. But the writing on the wall was clear even to the most convinced Moroccan-Jewish nationalist.

The second crucial factor is the Middle East situation, and every Arab-Israeli incident sends a tremor through the Jewish community.

"We have good relations with the police," a Marrakech jeweller told me, "and we have no difficulty getting passports to leave. The problem is, as it always was, the mobs that come from the slums. Should anything happen to the king, we will be the first to get it in the neck. I myself am not waiting for that. By the end of this year, you will see me in Haifa, where I have bought a small restaurant. My daughter is already there."

IN MARRAKECH, in spite of the tensions, the members of the rapidly diminishing community are closely bound to each other and have an active communal life. Bar mitzvahs and other occasions provide reunions for the shrinking number who remain. Gathered into what was once a Jewish courtyard, its ceiling ornately adorned with floral patterns and stars of David, the walls bright with blue tile mosaics, the Jews gather to eat and drink and listen to the Arab orchestra. But the atmosphere is strained and the gaiety is forced. The faces of the older people are tired and reflect their preoccupation with worry about tomorrow. The young are full of questions.

"What is life like in Israel? Are immigrants well received?" They are disturbed by reports of discrimination and Black Panthers, amply featured in the Moroccan press. "What are the schools like? Will we be able to get scholarships?" They are all proudly pro-Israel and many showed me clippings from "Paris Match" and "The Jerusalem Post" that they kept hidden in their homes. Over and over again the refrain is heard: "Life is good here, but there is no future."

Late on my last night in Marrakech, I walked with my guide in through the thick gate of the mellah and past the shuttered shops to his home. We climbed up to the flat roof-top and looked down into the window of the house across the street, almost close enough for me to touch. There, sprawled in one bed, three Jewish children lay sleeping peacefully. Before me stretched terrace after terrace of the mellah's homes. Beyond, I could see the tops of the date palms and in the far distance, the snowcapped mountains of the anti-Atlas range. Here, as in the other cities of Morocco, the Jews were little attached to the land. Shut in by the walls of the mellah, they saw little of the country save the sky, from just such a rooftop. Those who still remain are winding up their affairs and preparing to leave. For the first time in centuries, they have an alternative to remaining an oppressed minority in a hostile world, and the existence and strength of Israel gives them confidence. The future is unknown, but they are optimistic.

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